

Yamaha YD-9022WD Drum Kit



by Bob Saydlowski, Jr.

Yamaha. It's been a major name in music for a long time. The *YD-9022WD* kit is part of the *9000D* Series—a 5-piece kit with birch shells. Yamaha also has, (at a slightly lower price) the *9000DA* Series with camellia/mahogany shells for a deeper, mellower response and heavier sound. Both series are modular; all components are interchangeable.

Yamaha wood shells are formed in groups of three or more plies, layered cross-grain. They use a special "Air Seal" process to keep the shells in round. Pressurized air forms a permanent seal for the shell. Inner and outer seams are angled to give more strength to the drum at seam points.

The components of the *YD-9022WD* kit are: 14 x 22 bass drum, 16 x 16 floor tom, 8 x 12 and 9 x 13 toms, and a 5 1/2 x 14 metal snare drum.

The 14 x 22 bass drum has 20 lugs fitted to its 10-ply shell, along with laminated wooden hoops. The batter-side hoop has a rubber piece attached at the bottom for pedal mounting, so that you don't dig up the hoop attaching and removing the pedal. A felt strip is placed behind the batter head. The drum has T-handle tension rods and cast claws. Yamaha has had the insight to substitute square-head drum-key tensionable rods for the two T-handle rods at both bottom sides of the bass drum. Besides making pedal mounting easier, the regular square-headed rods make for finer tuning, without having a T-handle angled so that the bottom of the drum is lifted up and rests on a corner of the T-handle.

The bass drum spur's block plate has two slots in it; one for the spur leg to fit into at a set playing angle, the other to allow it to pack away flush to the shell. The spur leg itself is cast to angle forward when set-up, and it locks in place with a large wing bolt. It is adjustable in length via a telescopic inner leg, locking with a knurled knob. The tips have rubber feet with exposable spike ends. The spurs hold the bass drum very well and

are very simple to set up and take down.

I played the drum with both coated-*Ambassador* heads on, and it gave a loud, deep sound, perhaps a little boomy at times. Taking the front head off and placing a blanket against the bottom of the batter head yielded a good-sounding sharp thud. If you leave your front head off, Yamaha makes a bass drum stabilizer available: a tube that connects with the tom holder, extending to the bottom of the bass drum shell, giving it support.

The 12" and 13" mounted toms have 7-ply shells, and 12 lugs each. The floor tom is also 7-ply and has 16 lugs. All have regular square-head tension rods and triple-flanged metal hoops. Yamaha's lugs are springless. A neoprene ring surrounds the lug nut, keeping it in place. Beneath the lug nut is a swivel nut retainer. The lugs are very quiet—no rattling or buzzing; a big plus when recording or close miking for live performances. I had a bit of a problem with some of the lug nuts binding up while fitting heads, but after a little time, they corrected themselves. Each mounted drum has a badge attached on each side of the holder bracket, stating model and serial number, along with the Yamaha logo. They're arranged so that whichever way the drum is mounted, a Yamaha badge will always face front.

The holder receptacle on the mounted toms is a curved-sided square plate, with a metal backing plate on the shell's inside. Protruding from the plate is a solid cylinder with a hexagonal hole. The holder's arm passes through the shell and is set with a large wing screw at the top of the receiver. The wing screw presses down on an insert inside the cylinder, keeping the drum stable by means of indirect pressure. The base block of the tom-tom holder is mounted towards the front of the bass drum, so toms may be positioned close together, but far enough away for comfortable playing. The block has two grooves in it

to accept Yamaha's *Memory Stopper* height clamp on the holder tube. A single 3/4" tube fits through the hole in the block, tightened with another large wing screw, backed with another metal plate inside. At the top of the tube is a thick triangular piece of steel with three holes in it. All Yamaha *TH-90* tom holders come ready to accept up to four drums. The tomtom angle arms fit into two of these holes (which also have memory clamps), the third is left open for an additional angle arm, or cymbal pipe. Four toms may be mounted on the bass drum by inserting another complete *TH-90* center pipe with arms in the third hole. Like the tom receiver plate, the angle arm's height is arrested by a large wing screw pressing an insert. The angle adjustment works on a ball-and-cage system. Protruding from the cage is a hexagonal steel rod (the angle arm itself) which fits into the drum's receiver plate. Once your precise angle is found, the ball is locked with a big wing bolt at its top. The entire holder works extremely well, and is very stable. I was very impressed by its capability for many angle settings.

The floor tom has three 18" legs, rubber tipped with exposable spikes. 23" legs are optional. Each leg fits into a rectangular bracket, and tightened with a wing screw. The positive grip prevents the leg from twisting or slipping.

There are no internal or external dampers on any of the drums (besides the bass drum's felt stripping) and none are listed in the catalog as an accessory. I suppose if you want dampers, you'd have to go out and buy externals or risk drilling holes in the shells to install inside mufflers. I would recommend external dampers since head motion is more natural with them, and they won't choke up the head as internals do. Yamaha could at least include one for the snare drum.

Fitted with stock coated Remo *Ambassador* heads (made for Yamaha), the

toms had a bright sound with an average degree of overtone considering there are no dampers. The floor tom was full and round-sounding. I experimented with Evans *Hydraulics*, and the toms gave a very modern, flat, recording-type sound, but with considerably less volume. Higher tuning gave more life to the drums, but the overall sound was not really the same. A C.S. head was somewhat more of a happy medium.

Yamaha also makes 6-ply tympani-style tunable floor toms in 14" and 16" diameters. I played with a 16 x 16 (which lists for \$370.) Instead of having fixed lugs for the top tensioners, cam-cranks pull the rods down from the inside. The eight rods connect centrally to a bar in the shell which is hinged and protrudes on one side of the drum. A pedal footboard and pull rod connect to the bar. Like a tympani action, when the pedal is depressed, the rods pull down the head, and pitch automatically changes. The pedal can be mounted left or right of the centerpull for comfortable set-up. Also attached to the left of the footboard is a movable L-bar which, when set, can hold the pitch of the tunable tom. The whole thing works very well. Glissando effects are easy to achieve, and the range of pitch is extremely wide.

The snare drum included with this kit is the *SD-055MD*: a 5 1/2 x 14 steel shell, plated in chrome. The drum has 10-double-ended lugs and triple-flanged hoops. The strainer is of the parallel action type. A complex assembly is found at both ends of the shell, one end with a release lever. The snare unit is made up of two separately-pivoted 10-strand wire groups. It connects as one complete 20-strand piece, hooking into slots on the assembly. The snares can be adjusted vertically and horizontally like all *Super Sensitive-type* snares. Connecting the strainer internally is a metal rod which also serves to strengthen the shell. The weight of the shell, lugs, and strainer assembly combined make this a very heavy drum. I feel the strainer assembly is too complicated. There are too many things to do in order to get the sound you want. Yamaha does, however, make other metal and wooden snare drums with less extravagant mechanisms.

Yamaha's 9000 hardware is perhaps the sturdiest in the industry. Both a straight and boom cymbal stand come with the *YD-9022WD* kit. Both have double-braced legs and fold from the bottom. The tilters are extra-long, anodized, and adjust on a ratchet. Unlike most other stands with their metal cup washer and rubber sleeve on the tilter, Yamaha uses a one-piece molded hard plastic cup-and-sleeve. Also included are two very thick fells. All section tubing is

fattened-up. The stands each have two extendable tiers from their tripod base. Height is adjusted using a wing screw (embossed with the Yamaha name), tapped into a cast boss at each tube top. Inside is a split plastic core with a piece of spring steel. The wing screw touches this and the height is set tight with a minimum force of tension needed. There is no way the tubing will slip or turn. The height locking on these stands is perhaps the best I've come across. The boom stand's legs fold out to an extra-wide stance, if needed, and like the straight stand, it will not lip over. The boom arm is short with no counterbalance weight. (This stand is so heavy, it doesn't need one.) The boom angle adjusts with a ratchet; length is set with a wing bolt. For those drummers who don't really need heavy double bracing, Yamaha also has the 7000 series with single-braced legs, but including all the other features.

The snare stand has a tripod base folding from the top. It's of the popular basket-type. Angle is adjusted by a ball-joint system, the same as the tom holder and just as versatile. In addition, the entire basket may be moved back and forth on a short piece of hex steel, providing a leeway for position of the drum in relation to the stand itself. Each arm on the basket has a fat, hard rubber grip. The basket assembly clamps to the drum via an adjustable knurled thumb wheel at its bottom.

Yamaha includes their compression spring hi-hat with this drum kit. It has a tripod base, single-braced, with two sprung spurs at the frame base. (I would have preferred double-bracing.) The spring tension is independent of the pull rod, adjustable externally at the top of its tube chamber. The hinged heel footboard has a removable toe stop and connects with a fat plastic strap. Tilling the bottom cymbal is done with a sprung hex-headed screw. I found the tilt screw to be difficult to turn. A regular thumb screw would do, or better yet, a short drum-key sized screw. The clutch uses nylon locks, top and bottom, preventing metal-on-metal contact on the clutch assembly. The hi-hat was very easy to play and had smooth action with no noise.

The 901 bass drum pedal is of the single post, single spring type, working on ball-bearing action. It has a cast hinged-heel footboard matching the hi-hats. Linkage is best described as a nylon "tank track". The plastic beater cam is ribbed to correspond with the ribs in the nylon strap. The felt beater's height is set with a wing-screw/eye boll. Beater throw and footboard height adjust by means of a ratchet atop the spring holder. Tension is adjustable, as is the shaft height. The entire pedal clamps to the hoop with a cam action—a crank arm at the bottom left fixes the clamp plate

onto the hoop. Two sprung spurs are found at the base of the frame. The pedal had a nice feel for a single spring model. Action is smooth and powerful. (I also noticed in my Yamaha catalog there is an optional longer-length linkage strap available.)

The Yamaha 9000D series is currently only available in Real Wood finish. Their 9000DA Series, tunable floor toms, and line of concert toms are all available in Real Wood, jet black, white, or chrome. The Real Wood (which I saw) is not a plastic covering, but is the genuine lacquered veneer of the shell. The drums look beautiful outside as well as inside; very professional. There were no defects in the shells, nor in the chrome plating of hoops and lugs.

The Yamaha *YD-9022WD* is a professional kit. Design and engineering have been well thought out. The hardware line is a big plus. I must confess, I've fallen in love with the cymbal and snare stands. The same sized kit with 9000DA Series drums and hardware retails for \$140 less than its big brother. In addition Yamaha has recently introduced a lesser expensive 5000-Series kit with Meranti wood shells. But the overall appearance and capabilities of the birch-shelled *YD-9022WD* along with the great hardware surely warrants the higher costs. The kit reviewed here may also be ordered with 7000 hardware at a slightly lower cost.



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